



**The Kansas City Star**

January 26, 2008

Letters to the Editor

**Call an ambulance**

I am a nurse at North Kansas City Hospital's Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory. After reading Alan Bavley's article (1/17, A-1, "Faster help for heart attacks"), I would like to emphasize one major point.: Call an ambulance if you are having chest pain.

Do not drive yourself or have a family member drive you to the hospital. A public misconception is that the faster you leave for the hospital, the faster you will get the proper medical treatment. This isn't true. A typical emergency response time is a matter of minutes. This seems like a long time to wait when you need help, but you can take an aspirin while you're waiting.

Once the paramedics arrive on the scene, care begins instantly. They notify the hospital, get important patient information, start IVs, give medications, treat fatal arrhythmias, and drive fast all at the same time. As the ambulance is driving, all the right people are getting into place to continue the treatment without interruption and avoid any lines you would be in if you had arrived to the hospital in a private vehicle.

Numbers don't lie. We can consistently show that those patients who arrive by ambulance get angioplasty in half the time of those who arrive by private vehicle. The bottom line is that Emergency Medical Services are worth waiting for, and it can save your life.

**Vickie Rupard, RN**

*Kansas City*